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THE "KNOW THYSELF" SERIES

LESSON NUMBER FIVE

Seven

THE HOUSE OF WISDOM

Ways

Wisdom Hath Builded Her House

Wisdom and Her Promises

Who is Wise?

To

The Portrait of a Wise Person

Down to Earth

Selfhood

REVELATION NUMBER 132

"THE INTELLECT OF THE WISE IS LIKE GLASS.
IT ADMITS THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN AND REFLECTS IT."

-- Hare

Beloved Centurion:

In this series, THE SEVEN WAYS TO SELFHOOD, we have taken up the subjects GET ACQUAINTED WITH THYSELF, PLANT THE QUALITIES YOU WANT TO GROW, THE THREEFOLD LIFE, THE FOUR LINES OF DEVELOPMENT; and now we take up the study of wisdom.

Truly, these are subjects rich in material which can help you as a Mayan, a seeker after Truth, to develop physically, mentally, spiritually, in every way. Even your personality, your appearance, all can become beautiful. As your character develops and begins to unfold, your whole being can be likened to a budding rose.

This thought comes to me as I prepare this lesson for you, because sitting in front of me is a large glass bowl filled with roses of all colors. This beautiful arrangement of roses was given to me by a friend from her garden.

As I look at it, I think of our members when they first begin their study with us. One tight red rose bud in particular is directly in front of me; in my mind it represents the character of one who is just beginning his journey on the Mayan Path. Then, as my eyes follow the bouquet, I come to one bud which is beginning to unfold. This is a Mayan as he, or she, progresses a little way and is finding the Mayan Path GOOD. Then my eyes travel on around the bouquet to one full blown rose and I am reminded of you in the higher degrees; you who have stayed on the Path, and have learned and are learning more each day. The beauty of your character is full and wonderful.

You have become more mellow, kinder, more generous in your thinking. You have learned that with strong faith there is nothing impossible to you. You have learned the importance of giving of yourself and of your worldly goods. You are learning to control your emotions. You are learning SELF-MASTERY.

The subject of this lesson, THE HOUSE OF WISDOM, contains a wealth of knowledge for you and actually tells you what to do and what not to do; so as your Instructor, I ask you to read it very carefully and that you read it several times.

It has been said that God gives the wisdom as He gives the gold; His treasure house is not the mint but the mind.

WISDOM HATH BUILDED HER HOUSE

The Ninth Chapter of the Book of Proverbs begins with a word picture which might well be made the subject of a great painting. It is of Wisdom standing before a house newly built, extending an invitation to all to be her guests. She declares that she has hewn out the seven pillars - the perfect number - always included in the plans for a building intended for instruction and council. Her

table is furnished, she says, and her servants are ready to provide all who will enter with the refreshment of understanding.

If the picture were painted, various reactions to the invitation would need to be portrayed. Some of the throng would be paying no attention as they pass on to the House of Folly. Others would be dumbly intent on moving down the street to the House of Ignorance. But some, with the dawning light of awakening on their faces, would be turning in at the House of Wisdom to be her guests and to be fed at her table. Among them, if you are a seeker of the maximum selfhood, would be you. You are, of course, a seeker after Wisdom. YOU ARE A MAYAN.

This picture, whether painted in colors or words, provides a perfect figure under which to consider, and let us hope come to understand, some very important things about Wisdom and the possible part it can play in the business of living. To visualize it either to the eye or the mind, and thus be able to see the human interest in it, should add a great deal of clearness and force to the impression.

To begin with, Wisdom has made ample provision for any number of guests, and is ready to serve any who may choose to turn in at her door any time. No special invitation is necessary, for any human being has a standing invitation. No special time is set, for the House of Wisdom is always open, always lighted, and always the scene of activity. But these guests must choose to come. She invites and receives many, but she makes the choice for none. All for which we are likely to succeed, and all for which we deserve much credit in this world is that upon which we decide for ourselves. Unless we do the deciding, the choice does not reach deep enough to hold.

There is a familiar parable about ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five of whom were foolish. The five who were wise had provided themselves with oil for their lamps to light their way to a marriage feast which symbolizes any high privilege or experience of life. Just at the arrival of the bridegroom the foolish virgins complain that their lamps are going out, and ask their wiser sisters for some of their oil. These five wise young women have been criticized by many for not granting this request, but how could they? The oil of preparation for the light of an understanding mind is not transferable. It is acquired by long and patient effort, and it can never be used by anyone but the person who has made that effort. Wisdom and its means and fruits may be freely had, but they cannot be given to, much less forced upon another. Each must choose and obtain them for himself. No one can push you into the House of Wisdom, and it would not be of any benefit to you if they did. Those who profit by their presence there are those who choose to go there.

With the House of Folly and the House of Ignorance Wisdom cannot compete on the same terms. She offers no immediate self-indulgences nor any indolent and wasted hours. Her house is quiet, for her guests are thoughtful people. Her table is abundantly supplied, but only with the best nourishment for the truer interests of life. The shallower manifestations of luxury are not there. To the neurotic her ways would seem boresome, and they would not be happy in her house. But there character is broken down by neither neglect or self-indulgence. Neither is it cloyed and weighted with any overdeveloped physical consciousness. It is strengthened, undergirded, and prepared to meet situations, make decisions, and find ways to desirable realizations and fulfillments. The House of Folly charges high for the

superficial values it offers. The House of Ignorance makes no immediate charge for its pallets of straw, but those who turn in there pay heavily in the losses they sustain throughout the years. For her entertainment Wisdom makes no charge, save the necessary willingness, interest, and effort.

Yet those who turn in at the House of Wisdom enjoy their stay better than they may at first realize. They may have had their doubts about it when they went. The idea of finding pleasure in obtaining wisdom would seem strange to some. But, when Wisdom's guests have once caught the spirit of the quest, and begin to discover how valuable is their acquisition, they find it is the greatest pleasure of all. Theirs is not the life of dull eyes, tired muscles, jangled nerves, and nagging regrets. Wisdom's guests are bright and happy in the realization that they are finding pathways to values that will never fail them and to joy that will never dull or grow stale.

In these times more than ever before what the House of Wisdom has to offer is a necessity. The path of life has become so confused that the only safe person is the wise one. The way into the House of Wisdom is a sure path to selfhood. The very fact that you are thinking about it is an indication that you will decide to turn in there, and you will always be glad you did.

WISDOM AND HER PROMISES

In the fine essay on Wisdom from which we have taken the foregoing picture she describes and characterizes herself. Let us get better acquainted with her by noting what she says about herself.

She says the Lord possessed her in the beginning of his way, and that she was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was. When God prepared the heavens, and set a compass on the face of the deep, and established the clouds, and set the boundaries of the sea, and appointed the foundations of the earth, she was there. Wisdom, then is not something we build or make. She existed before we came upon the scene, and was waiting for us when we were born. Wisdom is something we receive, something we get by developing a capacity for it.

Now let us make a brief survey of the promises Wisdom is here represented as making, remembering that these things are ascribed to her by men who devoted their lives to knowing her well. What does she promise to do for those who put themselves under her instruction. We sometimes read advertisements of schools and teachers, setting forth what their particular training is supposed to do for those who take it successfully. Wisdom has here advertised her course of instruction too, and no other teacher has offered a list of benefits so long, so valuable, and so sure.

She promises that those who hearken to her shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. She promises that discretion shall preserve them, and understanding shall keep them. She promises that they shall walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous, and be among the upright who shall dwell in the land and the perfect who remain in it.

She promises length of days, riches and honor, ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace. She promises that her disciples shall walk in her way safely,

that their feet shall not stumble, and that their sleep shall be sweet for they are not afraid. She promises that they shall inherit glory, while shame is the only promotion for which fools can look.

She promises to preserve those who love her, to promote and bring to honor those who exalt her, and to crown her devotees with glory. She promises that when her children walk their steps shall not be straitened, and that when they run they shall not stumble. She promises that whoever finds her finds life and favor with God.

She promises that by her, days shall be multiplied and the years of life increased. She promises that the heart of her guest shall instruct his mouth and add learning to his lips. She promises that he shall prove his love for his own soul, and that he shall find good the understanding he keeps.

She promises that he shall walk in his integrity, and his children be blessed after him. She promises that his thoughts shall tend to abundance, while those of the careless tend to want. She promises that in his house shall be unspent treasure and oil for food and light.

She promises that his house shall be builded and established, and its chambers filled with all precious and pleasant riches. She promises that he shall be strong, and that his knowledge shall increase his strength. She promises that the knowledge of wisdom shall be like the taste of honey to his soul, and that his expectation shall not be disappointed. She promises that even though he may fall seven times he will rise up again.

These things are not promised in the House of Folly or the House of Ignorance. In fact, they are not assured anywhere else than in the House of Wisdom. Other things may be promised elsewhere, but their value is doubtful. In some cases it is negative. In every case it is temporary.

"At the devil's booth are all things sold.
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold.
For a cap and bells our lives we pay.
Baubles we buy with a whole soul's tasking.
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
And only God may be had for the asking."

There is no question about the ability of Wisdom to make good her promises. She has demonstrated it over and over. Take the really wise people of history and of your own acquaintance. Have not these things been fulfilled in their lives? They are not bribes Wisdom offers people to come to her house. They are the natural result of living the kind of life they learn there.

At the door of the House of Wisdom, then, stands a wonderful ally and helper in your program of building selfhood. She offers materials that will not fail in a day, or a year, or ever, for she is a daughter of the everlasting, and she deals only with that which abides.

All in all, what do you think of her list of assurances as a schedule of maximum selfhood? It might be as good a blueprint as any to adopt for the pattern of development you would like to achieve.

WHO IS WISE?

We have already defined Wisdom sufficiently well for our present purpose. We will make no further effort here to explain its nature. Instead let us now look at several possible people, with the thought of adding to the clearness of the idea.

Number One is a young person who has had an intelligence test and has been found to have a very high quotient. His reactions are quick and accurate, and within his field of experience he answers questions very well. He shows a high ability to recognize situations at a glance. He is capable of learning and remembering facts with ease and assurance. He is also capable of performing tasks quickly, accurately, and well. He is intelligent.

Number Two is an amazing repository of facts. He has familiarized himself with the literature of a certain field of interest. He has taxed his eyes and body with these long and extensive labors. He is known as an authority in his field, but he has paid a high price for the reputation. Much of his knowledge is of no great general value; but he knows it well. He has never done much with it, but he has it. His facts are cold and lifeless, but they are in mind for ready reference. He is learned.

Number Three is considered brilliant. He knows a little, and in a superficial kind of way makes the most of it. He impresses people as knowing much more than he really does and of being much more capable than he really is. One person who understands him well has remarked that he does a very large business on a very small capital. His personality is really not so much brilliant as it is dazzling. Like fool's gold, it shines so brightly and looks so real that it can easily be taken for the real thing; but also, like fool's gold, it will fail under test. Still, he gets along, receives favors, and usually gets his way, whether or not he deserves it. He is clever.

Number Four is a well-disguised self-seeker. He is out to get every possible value and advantage for himself, and he knows how to go about it. He cultivates people who are in a position to grant favors. He fawns over people in whom his only interest is something he can get from them or some way in which he can use them to help accomplish some scheme. He is good at this, and so far has done well in a material way, but his life is built on shifting sand that will not hold when the storm comes. He is smooth.

Number Five also has a good I.Q. but it is all dedicated to himself. He is expert at seeing how he can take advantage of situations and manipulate them for his own benefit. But he poses as a benefactor rather than a pirate. He adroitly stays within the law, and manages to keep his real motives so well covered that people do not see them. Some of those of whom he takes advantages think it was just a fortunate accident for him when he was planning it that way all the time. Some he even makes feel that he is really doing them a favor when the fact is that he is cheating them shamefully. So far he has won in many deals, but his philosophy is

not good, and his schemes will fall in on him sooner or later. But in quickness of seeing and deftness in seizing an advantage he is smart.

Number Six has a reasonably high I.Q. but not as high as many others. He is well-informed, but he has not made himself a factual authority in any field. He scorns crooked methods, so his material store, though adequate to his needs, is comparatively modest. But he has an amazing capacity for choosing the best road and doing the best thing in given sets of circumstances. He lives content because he has nothing to fear. His peace of mind is not broken with regret, for he has done the best he could as he came up through the years. What friends he has are good ones. He has no dread of the future because he brought himself into harmony with the power ruling the universe and knows he is going whatever way it goes. He looks on life with confidence because there is no dishonesty in his record to rise up and mock him. His heart has no dragging hunger because he feeds on the fruit of the good he has done. For him life grows better and the goal surer every day, for he has lived in such a way as to make it so. He is wise.

THE PORTRAIT OF A WISE PERSON

Let us now try to sketch the picture of a wise person in a little fuller detail. We have listed the benefits Wisdom has to offer. Now let us ask what kind of people they become who accept her invitation to be her guests and what they do.

First, the wise person starts with the recognition of the Divine. We are told that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Of course the word "fear" is not here used in any undesirable or unpleasant sense. It is not used in the sense of terror, but rather in that of recognition and respect. We admire Niagara, but we know better than to tamper with it. We respect and appreciate our wonderful sun, but we respect it too much to try to take liberties with it, even if we could. We could hardly claim to love anything we do not respect enough to try to keep in right relations to it. All careful thinking starts with the assumption of God, for we cannot have effects without a cause. All satisfying living relates itself to the Infinite, for we dare not sail without a chart and a goal.

Second, the wise person reverences life, wherever and in whatever form he finds it. He knows it is animated by something not of earth or the handiwork of man. He is kind to dumb creatures. He sees the divine image in little children, in struggling men and women, and even in the derelicts who have been marred in the crush of existence. Whatever he believes in or does, it is because he thinks it in the best interest of life. He thinks everything else secondary. He realizes that all gain and advantage will take care of themselves if the interests of life are conserved.

Third, because of this fundamental respect for life the wise person respects people. He may respect some of them partly for notable achievement and demonstrated ability, but he also respects those who have no such qualifications to offer. To him any human being is royalty, even though that person may have been denied a throne. The idea of thinking of human beings as machines or expecting from them no higher grade of living than that of the lower animals is to him a horrible thought. Since he treats everyone as having royal blood he not only keeps the good will of all and has influence with them, but he causes many of them to begin living

with the dignity and honor for which they have noticed that he gives them credit. Thus he has found and uses one of the fundamental principles for improving the quality of the lives around us. This last is the duty of all Mayans who have reached the degree which carries the title "Mayan Minister".

Fourth, the wise person respects himself, not in the sense of being egotistical, self-centered, or self-important, but in that of realizing that he too was created a superior being obligated to live a superior life, to play a superior role in the drama of the years and in a superior way. He respects himself too much to mar his character with evil or break down his body with bad habits. He respects himself too much to become characterized by petty thinking or insincere ways. He respects himself too much not to be careful of the choices he makes, the roads he takes, and the goals he seeks. He respects himself too much to let any but desirable influences affect his thinking and life. He respects himself too much not to expect the best of himself and hold himself to high standards. He respects himself too much to fail to live a worthwhile life and do a valuable work in the world. On one's respect for self and others, you see, the whole upward trend of the world's life seems to depend.

Fifth, the wise person discriminates correctly among values, and gives precedence to the lasting ones over the temporary ones. He knows that many of the showy things on life's counter will quickly tarnish, and that the dependable things will always remain the same just as they always have. He knows that many of the values of lasting worth are unseen, and therefore likely to be overlooked by careless eyes. He believes that there are certain good things which if he acquires he can keep forever, and that among them are the spirit of good will, the sense of justice, humility and sincerity of spirit, love for and of dear ones, faith in God, and the will to plan the patterns of better things and to work at them till they are accomplished. In such things as these he is rich, for he knows he can take them with Him.

DOWN TO EARTH

Let us now abandon all figurative language and get down to brass tacks about the approach to wisdom. After you are in the House of Wisdom and have begun your discipline there you will more clearly see each next step to take. But how do you get started? How does one enter that house in the first place?

Start from where you are. That is always what one must do, and many people never get on the way to their good because for some reason they want to start from somewhere else and cannot get there. Do not be a victim of this tendency. Never mind who, what, or where someone else is. You are not living his life. It is your own situation you must deal with. Start from where you are.

Overhaul and re-examine your present set of beliefs, policies, and ideals. Consider each with care. Has it worked well? Have you been satisfied with the results? Does it harmonize with the highest principles you know? If not, had you not better try to improve it or replace it with a better one?

Consider your friends and companions. Have you chosen them well? Is their influence constructive and wholesome? Your thinking is strongly affected by your associations. Is that effect favorable? Do not mistreat or shun even the shallow

and foolish, but do not have them for close associates either. Walk with them only to be helpful, but seek your associates from among the best and wisest people you know. Be kind to all, but let your friends be people from whom you can learn something of value. Many a wise person is so because of one or a few wise friends. Think what it would have meant to be a friend of Solomon, or Plato, or Seneca, or George Washington. That would have been a wonderful privilege, yet it may be that others capable of inspiring and teaching you as much may be within your reach right now.

In a certain university town years ago lived a wise cobbler. Professors and university officials used to talk with him when they took their shoes to be mended, and they profited by the conversation too. After he had passed on and many of these men had grown elderly they used to speak of him with appreciation, and say that much of the truest wisdom they knew they had learned in his school of philosophy. You never can tell where you may find a valuable friend like that.

Avail yourself of the riches of the wisdom the sages of the past and present have given us. Keep such works as those of Confucius, Marcus Aurelius, Emerson, Ruskin, the best of the poets, and others, of course, including the Holy Scriptures, near you. Read them in tense moments to relax you, and in relaxed moments to inspire you, and at other times to edify you. Ponder what you read. Put into your mind SOME GEM OF WISDOM the last thing at night and GO TO SLEEP WITH IT THERE.

Be thoughtful. Often in your musings you will find your mind contacting higher sources of wisdom. That is inspiration. Do not talk about it. Just cultivate and use it. It will speak for itself. Do not let the habit run into moodiness. Keep it normal and wholesome.

Listen to the talk of wise and thoughtful people. Notice how an exchange of viewpoints cuts away the roughnesses in people's thinking and adds to the ideas discussed. Talk over your own problems and questions with wise counselors. As time goes on perhaps people will be wanting to discuss theirs with you.

When you have a choice or decision to make weigh the yes and no factors against each other till you feel certain which outbalances the other. Then consider it from the long time point of view, and try to choose the course you are most certain will hold up and wear best. Try to realize how it will be when it has reached maturation. If you figure right two times out of three, you will be ahead.

Watch and take account of such elements as emotion, self-interest, and outside influences in considering questions and arriving at conclusions concerning them. These influences are strong, and they can color your thinking till the issue is clouded, and pull you off the track of good thinking.

Try to have an informed and cultivated conscience, and give it a large place in all your thinking and deciding. Nothing will meet the final test unless it is right. Only good and truth endure. There is no wisdom without deep and faithful loyalty to them.

Learn the fallacies and avoid them. It is so easy to yield to an argument that looks or sounds well. False premises will lead you afield, and so will

fallacious logic. Fallacy will mark you as a slipshod thinker, and soon rob you of not only the confidence of others but that of yourself as well.

Keep your thinking at a high level. Take the grade of person whose wisdom you admire and would like to duplicate. Try to make your thought processes and conclusions what those of that person would be. This will support and upgrade your thought life. Check your thinking often against that of the masters.

Build a thought life of your own. After you have read or heard what others think, accept what seems good and reject what does not. But in any case, build what you accept into the product of your own mind. Learn from others, but do more than appropriate from them. Let the main body of your mental work be something on which Destiny writes your own name.

Recognize your limitations and do not be afraid to change your mind. One's viewpoints should always be subject to review, for experience will be throwing new light on them all the time. We all make mistakes, and have to revise our opinions as we go along. That is the way we approach a thought pattern that is true and dependable. Not to grow in understanding would not be wisdom.



As we come to the close of this glorious and enlightening study of wisdom, let us learn that a man's wisdom is his best friend; folly and ignorance are his worst enemies. The reason for this study is to teach you that true wisdom is to know what is best worth knowing and to do what is best worth doing.

May God bless you as you continue your study of THE SEVEN WAYS TO SELFHOOD, which I like to call "KNOW THYSELF".

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR.

The next lesson of this series, entitled FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, brings you the following important subjects:

One Fertile Field

The Harvest List of the Soul

The Good Life

Solvent for the World's Problems

The Epidemic of Grace